

Not Quite Right News from Mark Golden

EMAILS RAISING DEATH RATE

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Washington, D.C.

FBI statistics recently released show an alarming increase in the national death rate and a peculiar connection to a certain style of email. The mailings in question are one of the most common online. These are typically called Forwards; emails which are sent from one recipient to another, to another, etc. Because of the speed of the Internet, any such email message can crisscross international boundaries million of times, within a matter of hours or days.

The FBI was alerted to this lethal system of correspondence when some of its very own agents dropped dead at their Bureau headquarters' computer terminals. At this year's FBI convention, annually held in Las Vegas, other agents were found dead in their hotel rooms at their laptops. After investigating such coincidences, they were found *not to be coincidences at all.*

Agency documents point to one infamous "Bunny, Bunny, Oh So Cuddlie" email. This seemingly harmless, amusing and colorful 'Inbox' item begins with an idyllic rural scene. Several cute cartoon bunnies giggle while hopping around on a sunny day. Birds singing merrily, a blue sky hosts a benevolent sun and smiling worms pop out of holes in apples, and so on.

Then below, is a short poem which the unfortunate, unsuspecting reader scrolls reading line after line. Simply put, it is an observation of, and admonishment to, "fully enjoy each day with a hippity-hop, no matter what today may bring." No harm there. Right?

At that point the recipient has scrolled right into harm's way! What follows is the instruction to *immediately* Forward this "Bunny" gram (so full of love and goodness) to 10 other people in order to brighten their day! Scrolling all the way down, the reader finds several brief accounts of the "woe" that befell previous recipients who foolishly Deleted Bunny, Bunny without dutifully forwarding it to the minimum amount of people. Death arrived quickly.

An FBI spokesman stated that, "This is the worst kind of spam. Albeit, following the fiendish instructions does somehow stave off a type of cyber Grim Reaper of sorts. We are still investigating its method of stealthy execution." Adding that, "The good ol' Internet has been hijacked as an instrument of fear, intimidation and death on a scale which we are only now becoming aware of. Many of our own employees have fallen due to emails innocently sent by

their own young children. In a ghastly nutshell, if you do not Forward such an email—YOU WILL DIE!"

He continued his explanation. "During the middle of the last century, before the advent of the Internet, the U.S. Post Office snail mail system was used as a vehicle for a nuisance called chain mail. Such letters, delivered by a postman often promised wealth and good luck, if they would only send a dollar to a certain address and of course forward the letter to ten others so that it would continue its path around the globe. If the recipient chose not to obey, and so, break their *link* in the chain, menacing tragedies and various types 'bad luck' would ensue."

In their research to end the spiraling death rate, federal agents devised a plan using real and placebo emails. A concocted bunny style email was sent out to death row inmates and anti-American foreign spies. Follow-ups at the physical locations revealed no harm done to the addressees who didn't forward the fake. Then with an implied denied consent of the President, the FBI sent to the same addresses, an intercepted, quarantined, lethal forwarded email – one entitled "Have a nice day!" This email is virtually a mirror image of the bunny gram in every way, but it uses a warm, smiling yellow sun to lure readers into its deadly trap. This time, follow-up showed that only 1 out of 3 death row inmates wished others to have a very "nice day." The other dis-interested two-thirds perished at the prison computer terminals. The anti-American spies all died as well—*not bad really!*

Though not common knowledge, the national and international death rate appears to be on the increase at a startling 15% per year. This is due to the worldwide use of the Internet to send such "forwards." Plus, the constant recycling over and over again on the Web is exactly like a fatal contagious disease. The agency foresees a decrease in the U.S. population by a whopping 225 million in the near future if the innocent trend is not stopped.

In conclusion, the spokesperson said, "The federal government is in no position to dictate that its citizens become cutesy, warm and fuzzy types who embrace such emails with gullible fascination simply to save their own lives. But the flip side is those of us who aren't of that natural, gentler, kinder persuasion will soon die out as a breed. Then the country and the global community will only be inhabited by screen-riveted, email recycling, easily-amused, animation happy, bunny huggers!"